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"Not Alms but a Friend."

THE WORK OF

Volunteer Visitors of the Associated Charities

AMONG THE POOR.

ITS LIMITATIONS, ALLIES, NUMBER OF WORKERS,
AIMS, AND GRAND RESULTS.

BY

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READ SEPTEMBER 10, 1880, AT THE SOCIAL SCIENCE
CONFERENCE AT SARATOGA.

"WHEREVER ANY FAMILY HAS FALLEN SO LOW AS TO
"NEED RELIEF, SEND TO THEM AT LEAST ONE FRIEND,—A
"PATIENT, TRUE, SYMPATHIZING, FIRM FRIEND,—TO DO FOR
"THEM ALL THAT A FRIEND CAN DO TO DISCOVER AND
"REMOVE THE CAUSES OF THEIR DEPENDENCE, AND TO HELP
"THEM UP INTO INDEPENDENT SELF-SUPPORT AND SELF-
"RESPECT."

VOLUNTEER VISITORS

I.—CANNOT DO THE WHOLE WORK AMONG THE POOR;
MUST REFRAIN FROM GIVING RELIEF;
THEIR MAIN WORK IS THE ELEVATION OF THE POOR.

II.—NEED THE HELP OF A TRAINED AGENT.

III.—NEED THE COUNSELS OF A CONFERENCE.

IV.—ONLY DEAL WITH ONE-SEVENTH OF ALL OUT-DOOR POOR FAMILIES.

V.—ESTIMATE OF VISITORS NEEDED IN BOSTON.

VI.—OF THIS ONE-SEVENTH, A LARGE PROPORTION CAN BE BEST BEFRIENDED
IN SOME EXISTING RELATION WITH SOME HOUSEHOLD, PLACE OF BUSI-
NESS, OR CHURCH.

VII.—GRAND RESULTS OF THE WORK; ITS AIMS BEING:—

- 1ST. TO MAKE SURE THAT CHILDREN DO NOT GROW UP PAUPERS.
- 2D. TO AID IN FINDING WORK ALL WHO ARE ABLE TO WORK.
- 3D. TO TRAIN IN SKILL ALL WHO ARE DEFICIENT.
- 4TH. TO MAKE SURE THAT HEALTH AND HOME ARE AS WELL AS MAY BE.
- 5TH. TO INSPIRE NEW HOPE AND SELF-RESPECT.

Alms are not the whole of charity.

"Charity must do four things,—

- I. Relieve worthy need promptly, fittingly, and tenderly.
- II. Prevent unwise alms to the unworthy.
- III. Raise into independence every needy person, where this is possible.
- IV. Make sure that no children grow up to be paupers.

Relief, detection, elevation, and prevention are all essential parts of a complete system."

"Families or persons who have fallen into want, usually need two things,—

First. Relief from their pressing wants,—food, if hungry; fuel, if cold; or clothing, if naked. This is the work of relief.

Secondly. They need a long, steady, patient pull, by a wise, strong hand, up onto solid land. This is the work in which the Associated Charities ask the cordial co-operation of every Christian man and woman in the city."

I. LIMITATIONS.

Volunteer Visitors, to achieve the best results, and especially to avoid harm, must know and obey certain limitations of their work, growing out of human nature.

As a rule they must not give alms.

The work of *relief* must be kept distinct, and be done by different agents; for four reasons,—

I. Experience has proved that alms can only be *judiciously given by a trained agent*. Years of study and practice and observation are needed to enable you to decide aright what and how much to give; what the real facts of the case are, and how much is put on to deceive; what the abilities of the family fairly are, and what is out of their power.

"Inexperienced Visitors are often — very often — deceived, especially if the poor think they have anything to gain. The confes-

sion of an experienced Visitor is always how often he has been deceived."

II. The best welfare of the needy is the controlling consideration. The argument is not that new Visitors give too much or give wrong things, but that excessive alms are a positive injury to the recipients. "Aid a man so often or so unwisely as to sap his manhood, his self-respect, his self-reliance, and charity has left a curse where it came to bless."

"I believe our irregular alms to the occupant of the miserable room, to the shoeless flower-seller, are tending to keep a whole class on the very brink of pauperism who might be taught self-control and foresight, if we would let them learn it.

"Let us imagine a case where we give to a man whose income is small. What is the effect on his character of these irregular doles? Do they not lead him to trust to them, to spend up to the last penny what he earns, and hope for help when work slackens or altogether fails? Does he try, cost what it may, to provide for sickness, for times when trade is dull and employment scarce?" — *Octavia Hill.*

"As wonderful and incongruous things are done in the name of charity as were ever perpetrated in that of liberty. If always twice blessed in spirit, it is often twice cursed in effect.

"If it covers a multitude of sins in those who give, it too often in another and worse sense covers a multitude of sins in those upon whom it is bestowed. To the worthless, scheming poor, it is a cloak for and incentive to, the sins of lying and idleness, and although they do not see it in that light, it is a curse to them in that it does incite them to those sins — it makes their lives morally degraded, prevents the development of any germ of human nobility or spirit of independence that might be in their nature." — *Thomas Wright.*

III. The friendly relations of a friendly Visitor, aiming to help a family to gain its independence, are often spoiled if the family hope to get larger alms by exaggerating their needs. "Nothing spoils the relations between a Visitor and those whom he visits more hopelessly than knowledge on the part of those visited that the Visitor has tickets or money to distribute, and that the amount which each gets will depend on the impression which he makes."

IV. Another reason, perhaps the strongest, is this : that friendly Visitors can only be compelled to study how to really improve the condition of the family, if they are forbidden to give alms. Alms are so easy to give, and so easy to ask for, and the repetition of the request comes so easy and so quick and so often! *Obsta*

principiis. Forbid it entirely. Let the Visitors go into the family forced to study what can be done of a permanent nature, either for the old or young, for the father, the mother, or the children.

For these reasons the Visitors of the Associated Charities of Boston are prohibited from giving alms on their own impulse, except, of course, in those extremely rare cases of immediate distress which overrule all law.

This, then, must be the Rule. Many will think it harsh, and even cruel, that volunteer Visitors shall give no *alms*. If nothing could be given, such visiting would be vain indeed; but if the only way visiting can be made effective for the gift of the best gifts,—self-respect, hope, ambition, courage, character,—is to keep it free from the dangers of deception and to put the poor on their own mettle, then all seeming harshness is lost in Christian love.

I fear to admit that the rule has exceptions, lest each and every Visitor, sooner or later, and many very unwisely, come to think his family is the exception.

Where you are sure your poor family is doing their best, and uses your gift, not to lessen their efforts, but rather to redouble them, a gift of food, money, or any other aid, may be a blessing both to giver and receiver.

Well may a visitor, in such case, aid the poor with purse as well as counsel and cheer, to make vigorous improvement in their modes of life. Miss Hill has written out of the depths of her heart, and the riches of her experience, words so full of wisdom that they cannot be read too often:

“ I hope you will notice that I have dwelt on the need of restraining yourselves from almsgiving on the sole ground that such restraint is the only true mercy to the poor themselves. I have no desire to protect the purses of the rich, no hard feeling to the poor. I am thinking continually and only of what is really kindest to them—kindest in the long run certainly, but still kindest. I think small doles unkind to them, though they bring a momentary smile to their faces. First of all, I think they make them really poorer. Then I think they degrade them and make them less independent. Thirdly, I think they destroy the possibility of really good relations between you and them. Surely, when you go among them, you have better things to do for them than to give them half-crowns. You want to know them,—to enter into their lives, their thoughts; to let them enter into some of your brightness; to make their lives a little fuller, a little gladder. You, who know so much more than they, might help them so much at important crises of their lives. You might gladden their homes

by bringing them flowers, or, better still, by teaching them to grow plants ; you might meet them face to face as friends ; you might teach them ; you might collect their savings ; you might sing for and with them ; you might take them into the parks, or out for quiet days in the country, in small companies, or to your own or your friends' grounds, or to exhibitions or picture galleries ; you might teach and refine and make them cleaner by merely going among them. What they would do for you I will not dwell on, for, if the work is begun in the right spirit, you will not be thinking of that ; but I do believe the poor *have* lessons to teach us of patience, vigor, and content, which are of great value to us. We shall learn them instinctively if we are among them as we ought to be as friends. It is this side of your relation to them, that of being their friends, which has given all the value to your work as district visitors : it has been because you have been friends,—in as far as you have been friends,—that the relation between you has been happy and good. The gift has often darkened this view of you, and prevented the best among the poor from wishing to know you : when it has absolutely been the expression of friendship, its evil has been reduced to a great extent. But the gift you have to make to the poor, depend upon it, is the greatest of all gifts you can make,—that of yourselves, following in your great Master's steps, whose life is the foundation of all charity. The form of it may change with the ages : the great law remains, “Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” But see that thou give him bread, not a stone—bread, the nourishing thing, that which wise thought teaches you will be to him helpful, not what will ruin him body and soul ; else, while obeying the letter of the command, you will be false to its deep, everlasting meaning. My friends, I have lived face to face with the poor for now some years ; and I have not learned to think gifts of necessaries, such as a man usually provides for his own family, helpful to them. I have abstained from such, and expect those who love the poor, and know them individually, will do so more and more in the time to come. I have sometimes been asked by rich acquaintances, when I have said this, whether I do not remember the words, “Never turn your face from any poor man.” Oh, my friends ! what strange perversion of words this seems to me. I may deserve reproach ; I may have forgotten many a poor man, and done as careless a thing as any one ; but I cannot help thinking that to give *one's self*, rather than *one's money*, to the poor, is not exactly turning one's face from him. If I, caring for him and striving for him, do in my inmost heart believe that my money, spent in providing what he might by effort provide for himself, is harmful to him, surely he and I may be friends all the same. Surely I am bound to give him only what I believe to be best. He may not always understand it at the moment, but he will feel it in God's own good time.” — *Octavia Hill.*

II. THE HELP OF A TRAINED AGENT

It soon felt to be a necessity in this work of Volunteer Visitors among the poor. Prohibited from giving alms, the work of really improving the condition of a family is often very hard. Visitors ask in despair what they are to do, and how to accomplish it. Even when the object to aim at is clear, the way to bring it about is hard to find.

The use and help of a trained agent soon becomes evident. Whether or not our agents in this branch of charity work, the elevation of the poor and the care of children, can also be wisely agents of relieving agencies, is an unsettled question. Certainly it would be a great economy. Both classes of agents must be salaried employees, and a duplication of paid agencies shocks our sense of economy. Yet the importance of this new charity work rises, when fully appreciated, to such transcendent importance, that nothing should be added to the duties of an agent devoted to the work of elevating the poor, which can seriously conflict with them, or divert his thoughts, or injure his relations with the poor, or lessen his power for good. Money must be an inferior consideration.

Boston is trying the experiment of separate agencies. The agents of the Overseers of the Poor, as well as some of those of the private relieving agencies, are salaried experts; while the eight salaried district agents of the Associated Charities are wholly distinct. The work to be done is ample to fully employ both sets of agents, and perhaps the duplication of labor in visiting the same family is offset by the gain of joint judgment and occasional co-operation. For every thousand families needing relief, one agent will always be wanted to give his whole time to the work of helping as many as he can to become independent. The paid agents must become, if only after long study and patient practice and many failures, experts in the art of helping struggling families permanently upward, as well as experts in making a diagnosis of the causes of the need. Why is the family down so low? What work can they do, the man or the woman, the sons or the daughters? Where can this work be found? What work can they not do and yet be taught to do? Where can they be put to learn it? Are they so discouraged as hardly to make the effort? How can you inspire new pluck? Is the man, or worse yet, is the wife or mother, addicted to strong drink? What can be done to make

them take or keep the pledge? If rooms are damp, and dark, and foul, how can you transplant the family into a healthier home? Questions swarm for both Trained Agents and Volunteer Visitors to answer if they can. Only an alliance of the two can help the good work grandly and successfully forward.

III. THE COUNSEL OF A CONFERENCE

Is needed to guide the new charity work in every district of a thousand needy families. Once every week or two, in the busy seasons at least, a meeting of a few business men and wise women, is needed to study the ways and means of making charity effective, and how to apply the best principles to each family in distress. Now that we appreciate that giving alms does not cover our whole duty to the needy classes, or even our most important duty, the happier classes must meet their new duties with devotion. The Catholics claim, I think with justice, that the credit is due to their admirable society of St. Vincent de Paul of making the counsels of a conference an important agency in deciding what families to aid, and how much and what kind of relief to give.

Volunteer Visitors can be admirably guided and helped by the District Conference, reporting fully all important facts and needs of the poor family, all the data for wise decision, attending usually in person to share in the discussion, and inspired by the weight of a general judgment to work for the desired results.

IV. ONLY ONE-SEVENTH OF OUR TOTAL OF OUT-DOOR POOR FAMILIES NEED A VOLUNTEER VISITOR FOR OUR PRESENT WORK.

The task of finding a friendly Visitor for each and every family in need of alms, is too vast for any large city to do. Another generation may achieve what is impossible now. The results of our work in Boston show that the immediate need grows less when we know and analyze the facts, than it appears at first.

Let me present the data derived from Ward 10, where the poor, though not very numerous, are of average needs and nationalities:

Total number of cases registered at Central Office, as in Ward 10, on July 1, 1880, who had asked or received re- lief from July 1, 1879, to July 1, 1880,	206
But so many of these were privately aided and visited that the Ward Conference had only	103
The whole number of persons in these 103 cases was (aver- aging $2\frac{8}{100}$),	291

Our District Agent found many of these cases aged persons needing *only* relief,

Or persons needing some kind of help which he could render better than a Visitor,

Or persons able to support themselves,

Or frauds who needed only exposure,

Or persons who had probably given wrong addresses.

So that the Conference only thought fit to send Visitors to thirty-five, or one-third of the cases coming to the District Office.

Of these thirty-five the Visitors were able to help about twenty-eight as follows :—

3 aided to be cured of disease.

1 aided to keep the pledge, and received advice.

3 widows were aided to clothe their small children.

4 widows received valuable counsel about their children.

1 widow was aided to get her two children into the eye infirmary.

1 widow was aided to get a sewing-machine and work.

1 widow was aided to stop begging.

1 boy was rescued from evil relatives and placed in a home.

1 widow received aid for herself and two small children while she was sick.

1 widow was aided to get a stove and then to get a pension.

11 families were counselled, and several were helped in finding — work.

28

All these twenty-eight families were cheered up into new hope and courage and a better life.

V. NUMBER OF VISITORS NEEDED IN BOSTON.

The Registrar estimates that one-fifth must be added to cases registered for total number of cases asking or needing relief, thus giving Ward 10, 247 cases in all.

Yet cases needing to be visited were only 35, or ONE-SEVENTH.

Cases in all Boston are estimated at . . . 9,275

Cases needing Visitors in all Boston . . . 1,325 on this basis.

If each Visitor takes two cases, only . . . 662 visitors.

Number of Visitors enrolled already . . . 560

So that one more vigorous year's work should succeed in send-

ing a Visitor into every family in especial need of what a Visitor can do.

Statistics are terrible things. Sometimes true and often false. I confess I am startled, and am not convinced by my own figures. Yet they are the best, and indeed all the data now before me.

They prove —

1. The feasibility of sending one kind and good friendly Visitor to each needy family where there is any especial work to be done, or good result to be hoped, in any city of not more than half a million inhabitants.

2. That excellent results ensue in nearly all of the families befriended in this wise, tender, business-like way.

3. Prohibition of giving alms must be the stringent RULE of such Visitor's work, in order to secure these results of rousing and helping struggling families into a higher life, and to avoid the danger of sinking them lower into the quagmire of indefinite alms.

As an exception to this rule, a conference may, by deliberate vote, authorize the Visitor to give specified relief.

The rule remains wise, that relief should come from another hand, the trained agent of a thoroughly organized relieving society working by wise and uniform and tested methods.

4. Christian sympathy will not, however, rest content with sending a friendly Visitor only where families may be lifted up. All that large class of poor old folk, who, in the decline of life, languish in poverty, appeal irresistibly for a kind face and a bright eye, as well as the loaf of bread, and all of these must come from the loving bounty of friends. This duty, which needs only to be stated to be felt, will indeed make a larger draft upon a corps of Visitors. And yet this work of restoring human relations between the fortunate and the unfortunate cannot halt till it is fully done. May the day not be far away!

VI. OF THIS ONE-SEVENTH, A LARGE PROPORTION CAN BE BEST BEFRIENDED IN SOME EXISTING RELATION WITH SOME HOUSE- HOLD, PLACE OF BUSINESS, OR CHURCH.

Let us beware of overestimating the work of this or any charitable society. The best work in this world is done quietly, secretly, with no pretence or parade, in the various walks of private life.

Here are formed the relations of real friendliness between a rich family and a poor family, which are most blessed to both, the rich often giving work and always ready with counsel, and, if need arise, giving substantial help; while the poor man feels he has a friend to whom he can always turn for sympathy.

The relation of volunteer Visitor will certainly not supplant this other more natural and more permanent connection, which is that of kindly neighbors. Nay, rather, it should aim to grow into it, or often to develop such a relation between a poor family and some other rich family, where some looser tie has perhaps previously existed. As soon as this is done, the Visitor may devote his work to another case.

Secondly. Our stores and places of business employ porters, errand-boys, washwomen, and others in various capacities; almost an army drafted from the poorer classes. Is it too much to hope that employers will find time and sympathy to learn enough of the needs of their employees to aid them with cheer and counsel, and at times with extra work to save them from distress, or, better still, to refrain from discharging them in some temporary lull of work, when the regular earnings may be necessary to save the worker's family from want? Here also volunteer Visitors may find a chance for excellent work. They can often interest an employer and develop a permanent and kindlier connection between him and his employee.

Thirdly. Our churches need to learn to make their charity to their own poor more scientific; that is, more really helpful. Rich churches are often too free with their alms. Far better that a well-chosen committee should aim to help into independent self-support every poor person in the parish where this is possible, than to be content to support them in semi-idleness and total want of self-respect. Here also our volunteer visitors often and easily bring about this result, not of making the poor parishioner independent, but of making the church feel the responsibility and assume the task of wisely *befriending* its own poor.

The work of finding at least one good friend for every needy family will not seem to be so hopeless nor to require such an impossible army of volunteer Visitors, when we thus realize that a friend for a needy person can often be found in one of these three ways—either in a rich family at their home, or in a business man at his store or place of business, or in some kind member of his church.

Cities of the size and needs of London and New York are alone

too vast for our complete grasp. In every other city of this country and of Great Britain, it must be possible, in no long time, to organize a corps of Visitors, who in the ways now developed, can find, or furnish, at least one friend for every family in need.

VII. THE GRAND RESULTS OF THIS WORK OF VOLUNTEER VISITORS AMONG THE POOR.

“The experience of the first year’s work of our Associated Charities justifies us in calling attention to this fact, or rather this great discovery, that a gentleman or lady will, in a surprising proportion of cases, discern means to help a family into independence, if he or she goes into their homes and learns the whole truth, what the various members of the family can do or can be made to do; going there not only not to give alms, but prohibited from doing so, and therefore forced to study how to aid the family towards self-support.”

It is idle to enumerate the causes which can be removed by the counsel, the cheer, the encouragement, the sympathy, the brains, of a gentleman or lady full of the strength and joy of life.

No one will believe it till he tries, or doubt it when he has tried. Money, too, can often be wisely used,—sometimes in teaching a trade, or furnishing a sewing-machine or tools, or in getting or giving work, or sometimes in making work; often in moving a wretched family from some den of disease into sunnier rooms, often in aiding sickly persons to regain their health.

Seven typical cases will show the value of Visitor’s work in as many different kinds of needy circumstances.

1. A widow was left on Lincoln Street with five young children. She got coal from the city, groceries from the Provident, sewing from Trinity Society, and other aid from two or three friends. While the children were young, perhaps she got none too much to keep her family together. But the children had grown old enough for the boy and girl to begin to work and to help support. Two paths open before that family. Let relief from these many sources go on too long, and the children see supplies flow in unearned, and there is danger lest they learn to live on alms and are made paupers. A friendly Visitor made sure that the boy and girl went to work at the right age, and soon the family could live on their own means without alms, and the family was independent.

2. A widow and six children on North Street are all beggars in the street, and, as they can do no work well, find so little to do,

that in their demoralized state they hardly think of seeking any, content to live on what they can get by beggary. A Visitor takes the eldest boy into his store at \$2 a week, making a place for him, and watching and teaching him; finds a place for the oldest girl in a family at seventy-five cents a week and board; also a place for the second girl where she can earn her board. He sends the mother to the sewing-rooms of Ward VI., where she is taught to sew, and earns fifty cents weekly, and is helped to find regular sewing at one dollar a week in addition; all however on condition that the whole family stop begging.

Three months pass by, and the Visitor found the family one Saturday evening counting up their joint earnings and in counsel how to use them. The whole family had been raised out of beggary into independence and conscious self-respect.

The alms of all the relieving societies in the world would not only have been impotent, but would probably have confirmed the family as paupers.

3. Another case finds an aged father and mother able to earn but little, and dependent upon the support of a son thirty-six years old, who had earned till recently twelve dollars a week, but is now prevented from working by chronic ulcer of his leg. Hopelessness has settled over all, and the Overseers of the Poor give such relief as may piece out scanty earnings. The Visitor sent the son to the hospital for treatment, where after daily attendance for a fortnight he was so well, though not wholly cured, that he found work at ten dollars a week and the family again became self-supporting.

4. A mother sees the world so full of gloom that to hide the sufferings of her half-starved children she seeks oblivion in drink. Punishment, imprisonment, will not cure the mother nor help the children. The cheer of a loving Visitor, work to do, sympathy, encouragement, may perhaps rescue the mother from discouragement and the demon of drink, and plant her on firm land, to the unspeakable blessing of her children, and the saving of herself.

5. Another woman has seen better days, but now in her distress knows no trade by which to support herself and her children. A friendly Visitor, who under our rules can give no money or its equivalent without the sanction of the conference, pays the sum needed for her to learn the trade of a hair-dresser, by which she can now easily support herself and family.

6. Another man is out of work in Boston, but if sent to a farm, can earn good wages. What better can a Visitor do than aid the man to go?

7. A family, with several children, in another case, are aided by the Visitor to move out of a damp cellar tenement into healthier and sunny rooms, to the permanent gain of all.

Cases might be indefinitely multiplied; but these are enough to illustrate in how many ways a friendly Visitor can help a struggling family into a better life.

1. Cutting off alms, and obliging children of the right age to go to work.

2. Finding, and even making work for mother and children, on condition that they stop begging.

3. Aiding a man to be cured of disease, who can then support his family.

4. Cheering up a discouraged and drunken mother to a new fight for life.

5. Furnishing means for a broken-down lady to learn a profession.

6. Sending a man to the right field for his labor.

7. Transplanting a family from damp unhealthy tenements into sunny rooms.

Among the pauperized classes of a great city, the chief obstacles are two, usually found together: lack of all skill, and lack of all hope. They can do nothing well enough to get work, and they are sunk in despair. They will make no effort to help themselves, or if you succeed in inducing them to try, there is so little they can do!

Leave them as they are, and they sink lower. Their children grow up in the midst of pauperism, expecting, if not even preferring, to be paupers like their parents.

Industrial training-schools are a potent remedy. Growing out of the Associated Charity work and experience in Boston, many agencies for training women have started. Chief among them is the North Bennet Street Industrial Home with its laundry, its rooms where women are taught sewing, cutting, and machine-work, its carpentering for boys, with a kindergarten school for girls, and a *creche* for infants. The laundry can point to many poor women now earning their own support, who a year ago were dependent on alms.

The relations, growing out of teaching these poor women, enable a Visitor to gain a friendly and powerful influence over them, inspiring them with new hope, and confidence, and self-respect.

Thus, a certain degree of skill and a new hope replace the old ignorance and despair, and so the two most fatal obstacles are often overcome.

Volunteer visiting is the only hope of civilization against the gathering curse of pauperism in great cities.

Thank Heaven, it is equal to the task in all the cities of this land at least, unless we must except New York, where the aggregation of paupers has become so vast and so prolific, and so entrenched in regions of their own, remote from the homes of the happy, that, as Miss Hill says of London, "The problem has become appalling, gigantic. Viewed in its entirety it might almost make us tremble."

CONCLUSION.

These are the results of our present experience with the work of volunteer Visitors among the poor :

I. They must rigidly refrain from giving alms, and, when they or their critics accuse them of cruelty, remember that the best welfare of the poor must be the controlling consideration, and "that while a kindly impulse may prompt you to give relief, your duty to the family requires you to consider their moral good, and not the gratification of your emotions."

Alms can be more judiciously given by trained agents. You are to give, what is far more precious than gold or silver,—your own sympathy, and thought, and time, and labor.

As an exception to this rule, when you know your family and yourself well enough to be sure you are acting wisely, money, or what money buys, may be added to your other gifts to your poor friends.

II. This work of volunteer Visitors can be aided and powerfully supplemented by an expert paid agent.

III. The counsels of a conference will be found almost always welcome to guide and cheer and assist your efforts.

IV. Owing at present to the necessary economy of our visiting resources, only about one-seventh of all the out-door poor will need the especial aid of a Visitor.

V. Visitors can often find in existing relations of a poor family with some household or place of business or church the chance of giving them the needed friend.

VI. The objects for the Visitors to aim at will then be—

- 1st. To make sure that children do not grow up paupers.
- 2d. To aid in finding work all who are able to work.
- 3d. To train in skill all who are deficient.
- 4th. To make sure that health and home are as well as may be.
- 5th. To inspire new hope and self-respect.

VII. The results of this work, when faithfully and tenderly done, are more than its most sanguine friends ever expected, and offer the first reasonable hope that the growth of pauperism may be repressed.

APPENDIX.

Ward 10, Boston. One year to July 1, 1880.

Total am't
of relief.

\$65 00.	3 families received permanent relief because sick.
183 00.	17 " received permanent relief because aged.
14 00.	3 " received temporary relief because of accident.
230 00.	29 " are working, and needed supplementary aid when unable to support their families.
94 00.	28 " are working, and it is hoped became able to support their families.
17 00.	10 " are improvident or vicious to such a degree that they should receive no relief.
-	3 " needed hospital treatment or fares.
-	10 " have left city, are dead, or were not found.

\$603 00. 103 families. Average of less than \$6 to each family.

This \$603 is the total amount of relief given by Overseers of Poor, Provident, St. Vincent de Paul, and other societies, so far as known; the value of coal, clothing, and rent being estimated.

AGAIN CLASSIFIED, ON A DIFFERENT THEORY.

Sick,	4.	{ 1 aided temporarily. 1 probably needing permanent relief. 1 sent to hospital. 1 sent to almshouse.
Aged,	5.	{ 4 of whom need permanent relief. 1 still nearly supports herself.
Widows,	52.	{ 14 were aged, needing permanent relief. 2 were sick, needing permanent relief. 28 working, and only needing supplementary relief. 1 was forbidden to beg by a son able and ready to support. 1 undeserving. 5 were self-supporting or befriended.
Large families, . .	15.	{ All are working and could become self-supporting.
Others,	21.	{ 1 needed to have a daughter looked after who had had an illegitimate child. 6 needed to find work. 2 needed protection against drunken husbands. 1 fraud. 6 undeserving and not needing relief. 1 temporary accident. 4 self-supporting.
Not found, . . .	6.	

Out-Door Poor of Boston.

	WARD.	Census.	Cases registered July 1, 1879, to July 1, 1880.	Estimated total families (1-5th being added.)
East Boston, . . .	{ I., . . . II., . . . III., . . .	14,825 15,303 11,504	126 141 156	151 169 187
Charlestown, . . .	{ IV., . . . V., . . . VI., . . . VII., . . . VIII., . . . IX., . . . X., . . . XI., . . . XII., . . . XIII., . . .	11,315 11,022 16,922 12,928 12,765 12,311 11,470 16,579 14,929 21,518	150 146 700 549 490 404 206 191 762 737	180 175 840 659 588 485 247 229 914 884
South Boston, . . .	{ XIV., . . . XV., . . . XVI., . . . XVII., . . . XVIII., . . . XIX., . . .	20,676 14,974 15,179 14,401 13,168 19,972	229 193 605 347 148 525	275 232 726 416 178 630
Roxbury, . . .	{ XX., . . . XXI., . . . XXII., . . .	17,421 14,679 12,742	269 99 162	323 119 194
West Roxbury, . . .	XXIII., . . .	14,032	135	162
Dorchester, . . .	XXIV., . . .	16,881	129	155
Brighton, . . .	XXV., . . .	6,422	10	50*
No residence, . . .	- - -	-	107	107
		363,938	7,776	9,275

* Estimated (34 aided by Overseers of the Poor).

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No. 21. ASSOCIATED CHARITIES OF BOSTON. March 18, 1881.

THE BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH
CHILDREN

TAKEN FROM HOMES OF VICE OR NEGLECT.

LIFE IN A FAMILY
vs.
LARGE INSTITUTIONS.

BY
Mrs. CLARA T. LEONARD,
OF SPRINGFIELD.

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS MADE TO THE ASSOCIATED CHARITIES OF
BOSTON, AT A GENERAL CONFERENCE ON FEBRUARY 14, 1881.

BOSTON:
TOLMAN & WHITE, PRINTERS, 383 WASHINGTON STREET.
1881.

INTRODUCTION.

This paper is printed at the request of the Executive Committee of the Associated Charities of Boston, in order to call attention to this most important subject—how to deal with the army of children, taken either from unfit homes because of the vice or neglect of parents, or because of some offence of their own. The ill consequences of collecting them into great institutions need to be known. The advantages of placing them in new and carefully selected homes need to be considered.

The supposed economy of aggregating them in the great public institutions, like Marcella Street Home and Monson, must yield to more important considerations of how all these boys and girls can be best made good men and women.

ROBERT TREAT PAINE, JR.,

President of the Associated Charities.

MARCH 18, 1881.

THE BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH CHILDREN TAKEN FROM HOMES OF VICE OR NEGLECT.

The constant increase of crime and pauperism, frequently in larger ratio than increase of population, leads the true reformer to seek out the source of the ever-renewed supply, in order to check the stream at the fountain head. Very brief research will show the true sources from which paupers and criminals spring:

First, And in much the greatest number, they are the offspring of generations like themselves, ignorant, idle, immoral persons.

Secondly, They are neglected children, of whom society fails to take due care in their orphanage and friendlessness.

Thirdly, They are the children of our prosperous and intelligent classes, who descend in the social scale, become vicious and dependent, through the want of thrift, industry and self-control on the part of their families or themselves. With all these classes, the Associated Charities are, by their declared purpose, called upon to deal.

We must bear in mind that all patriotic and humane efforts will succeed only gradually and in part.. The *measure* of success will depend on the number of workers, and upon the patience, energy and good judgment which they individually possess. The products of centuries cannot be reconstructed in brief time. Still, all good work based on sound principles, and faithfully pursued, will surely bring forth fruit in time, and in rapidly increasing ratio.

We must remember that a wide-spreading and large result will depend on two conditions :

1. Organization under wise leadership.
2. Persistent conscientious labor of many individuals, maintaining friendly personal relations with other individuals in need of aid.

Without organization and leadership, most of these well-disposed individuals must inevitably hold crude ideas, and derive them from a limited experience.

Organization enables many individuals to avail themselves of the

results of the experiences of other persons, who have studied the best methods under advantageous circumstances. It also enables many persons to act in concert with increased resources.

On the other hand, without individual and personal relations between human beings, philanthropic organizations become lifeless machines, and work without recognizing the great law of love and personal sympathy, which is to the spirit of man what the sun is to the physical world. We might as well try to till a garden without the sun's light, as to attempt to elevate our fellow-creatures without love for them, and by mere mechanical processes. Love can only exist between persons who are known to each other in personal relation.

In order to prevent children who are now in a fair way to increase our pauper and criminal class, from so doing, we must, then, work systematically with organization and good leadership ; and we also must bring out from among our good men and women, a large number of persons who are willing to sacrifice their time and ease to secure the benefits necessary for such children as may be entrusted to their personal charge.

The first principle under which organizations should act, to be effectual, must be the grand one upon which free institutions are founded ; that of local self-government. They must work within definite bounds, within which the organization shall be potent. While we never forget that we belong to a mighty nation, we must remember that all domestic government, all regulation of matters affecting the peace and order of society, is entrusted to the several States. The result of this great principle of government is, that States widely differ in the order and comfort which prevails within their borders ; the will and prevailing ideas of the people requiring higher or lower standards of order, economy, education, etc. But the towns, also, have great powers entrusted to them, and differ widely from one another in their standards of fitness and civilization. To deal wisely by organization with neglected, dependent, and vicious children, we should begin first with our own town, and, secondly, with our own State. If we are thorough in these, we may be content to have the rest of the nation follow our example, which they will in time, if we succeed. In our own town, we must seek for these things.

First, That all children supported by public charity are accorded all the opportunities possible to become good citizens.

Secondly, That all children living in homes of vice and idleness, likely to become vicious and dependent, be removed, if possible, from parental control, and placed under suitable guardianship.

Thirdly, That by friendly counsel and judicious aid, we encourage and influence the parents of other children whose habits of life are not what they should be, to improve their condition. This third class will be found to be very large. While the law permits no interference with this class, as it does in Massachusetts with the first two, there is still a great work to be done among the latter. As to our State, it is our duty from year to year, in our organization, to study our laws carefully, in order to see

- 1st. What can be done, under *existing* law, which is not done.
- 2d. To see how our laws may be amended and improved.

We must also use personal and organized effort to assist State officials in care of children dependent on State support, and those in State reformatory institutions or State custody.

CHILDREN SUPPORTED BY TOWNS.

Chap. 103, Acts of 1879, prohibits, with some exceptions, the maintenance of children in city and town almshouses, and requires overseers of the poor to place them in suitable families or in private institutions. The reasons for this prohibition are, that the associations of the almshouses are demoralizing, and that the life is not adapted to the development of a child's faculties and affections. The latter reason applies to all institution life in some degree. Children placed in average families, where good morals and industry prevail, are vastly superior in a short time to those who are reared even in the best private institutions. The ties formed in the family and neighborhood are usually lasting and valuable. Those towns in Massachusetts who have boarded out their young pauper children in country homes, *under careful supervision of local visitors*, have met with marked success. The same system is, by a law of 1880, Chap. 208, § 1, being now put on trial by the State, and children from the Primary School at Monson are beginning to be boarded in families at an early age. Foundlings and deserted infants, too, formerly sent to the State almshouse at Tewksbury, where they died almost invariably in a few weeks, are now boarded in families by the Superintendent of out-door poor, under careful visitation. About 60 per cent. of these live and thrive. They

receive the affection, too, of their nurses and companions to a remarkable degree.

The boarding out of pauper children in England has been, during the past ten years, adopted in consequence of the fearful demoralization of workhouse children. Above 1900 children are now boarded out in England alone, in cottage homes, under the local supervision of suitable women, with the most satisfactory results.

Mrs. Senior's report to Parliament in the appendix to the report of the Local Government Board, 1872,* will be found full of information as to the evils of institution life in England. No one familiar with our great public institutions can read it without being impressed with the similarity of experience. It seems, then, that children who are supported by public charity can be accorded the greatest benefit by an early and continued residence in a respectable family, where they are taken without compensation, or where a moderate sum is paid for board and care. To secure suitable care in families, however, we must have organized voluntary coöperation of good citizens of both sexes with officials. Without careful visitation by appointed persons, the children are exposed to great danger of neglect and abuse.

CHILDREN OF VIOUS PARENTS.

This class of children in towns, taken separately, also requires an organized coöperation of benevolent individuals with the overseers of the poor, and the police or constabulary force of the town. Neither officials nor volunteers can accomplish good work separately. Chap. 367, Acts 1873; Chap. 169, Acts 1878; Chap. 179, Acts 1879; Chapters 231 and 66, 1880, provide for the removal of children from the custody of vicious parents; indeed, also from that of imbecile and improvident ones.

Some expense must be incurred to obtain counsel and evidence in the trial before the Probate Court, which has jurisdiction in such cases. For this the voluntary organization should provide. It is

* Appendix to Third Annual Report Local Government Board — B — page 311.

Mrs. Senior's report was written eight years ago, and closes with a strong recommendation of the boarding-out system, so successfully carried out since that time. Her "Conclusion," page 341 to 345, is especially worthy of study. The same rapid increase in weight and stature of children removed from institutions — or wretched homes — to orderly family life, is observed in our own State, where the experiment of boarding out is tried; also the absence of ophthalmia, — that curse of large institutions and dirty dwellings.

of no use to remove children without providing a place for them. This must be done by volunteers. But it is quite proper when these children are young, and have a "town settlement," as it is termed, to ask the town authorities to pay for their maintenance in a family home. If old enough to be self-supporting, voluntary workers must seek for the employment, settle what the compensation should be, and supply frequent visitation to ensure good treatment, schooling, religious privileges, etc., and, if necessary, take charge of wages and provide for change of place, etc.

**CHILDREN OF UNTHRIFTY PARENTS WHO ARE NOT SUBJECT TO
LEGAL INTERFERENCE.**

For this large class it can only be said that the motto of the Associated Charities emphatically applies, "Not alms, but a friend." For every such case the remedy must be selected by careful study, and applied with mingled kindness and strictness. Like adults these children need advice, training, always avoiding the danger of creating a spirit of dependence, and endeavoring to lift up the standard of the family. In this connection it should be said that family ties must never be ruthlessly sundered. Very unworthy persons usually love their children, and are loved by them, and it is pathetic to see how brothers and sisters cling together when separated, and how children pine for mothers who seem to us to possess no lovable qualities. In cases however of great abuse, or of unwarrantable and injurious interference with the disposal of a child, we should unhesitatingly remove it from the reach and often from the knowledge of its parents.

The general tendency of our people is too great leniency to parents. Their rights are recognized when those of the child are ignored. Children removed by legal process from the custody of worthless parents should be held until the latter have, by very long continued good conduct, given assurance of lasting reform. The expense, too, incurred by public support should be wholly or in part repaid by the parents who, through misconduct, have made their children dependent. This is the law of France, and, if adopted here, would probably be a powerful restraint upon vice.

CHILDREN SUPPORTED BY OR IN CUSTODY OF THE STATE.

It would be impossible, in this paper, to describe the whole working of the Massachusetts system of dealing with children in its care and custody. These are:—

1st. Inmates of the State Primary School at Monson, who are dependent.

2d. Inmates of the Reform School, at Westboro', for boys, and of the Industrial School, at Lancaster, for girls, who are delinquent.

3d. Children, also delinquent, committed to the custody of the State Board of Health, Lunacy and Charity by the courts for petty offences, who may be committed to either of the above-named institutions, or placed in charge of families, individuals or relatives, at the discretion of the Board.

4th. Children indentured or placed out in families by the Trustees of the State Primary and Reform Schools, subject to the visitation of agents of the Board of Health, Lunacy and Charity; these are of both classes,—dependent and delinquent.

5th. Infants supported by the State in the Massachusetts Infant Asylum, or placed in families either by that Asylum or by the State.

Massachusetts has always recognized the great importance of family life for all except the most refractory or depraved children. The official work of placing out and visiting the wards of the State has recently been supplemented by a voluntary organization of auxiliary visitors to the State Board of Health, Lunacy and Charity.

Fifty-six ladies, representing all the counties of the State, each having certain towns assigned to her as her district, have been appointed to this work by the Superintendent of Indoor Poor, since November, 1879. These ladies, aided by their associates, whom they choose and for whom they are responsible, are performing the work of selecting homes for the female wards of the State, and visiting them in the manner and for the purpose described in this paper as desirable for children under charge of town authorities.

These auxiliary visitors receive no compensation for services, but their travelling expenses are repaid out of a special appropriation by the Legislature. Their work has of course varied. That of some visitors has been admirable and thorough. Of others imperfect and only vaguely understood. There is, however, a growing interest and understanding of the work, enhanced by stated meetings for conference, of which four have been held at intervals of four months.

Persons desirous of further information in regard to the method of dealing with the wards of the State are referred to the excellent papers of Mrs. Anne B. Richardson, a Trustee of the State Primary

and Reform Schools, and of Mr. Gardner Tufts, who was for several years at the head of the State Visiting Agency,—now in charge of the State Primary School at Monson,—published in the Report of the National Conference of Charities, held at Cleveland, Ohio, June, 1880. These Reports can be purchased of Frank B. Sanborn, Esq., State House, Boston, President of the Conference.

The Boston Advertiser, of Feb. 15, contains an interesting circular issued by the Auxiliary Visitors, for public information in regard to their work. This was subsequently reprinted by the principal newspapers in all parts of the State.

TO CONCLUDE.

Paupers and criminals are reinforced from the ranks of neglected and demoralized children.

Their number is so great, and increasing, as seriously to endanger the present order of society; so that not only humane, but interested motives should stimulate us to effectually deal with them.

TO DO THIS:

1. We must be organized and well informed.
2. We must personally act with self-denying and loving persistence for their benefit.

We must act within certain boundaries under the legal powers committed to our several towns and to our State.

Also we must act so thoroughly and on such a scale in every town that we gradually cleanse every community of its flagrant offenders and its blighted and squalid sufferers.

We must coöperate voluntarily with public officials; and we must also endeavor to create an enlightened public opinion and conscience. Were all religious and conscientious persons sufficiently alive to their duty toward unfortunate children, their wants would be speedily supplied, their wrongs redressed.

Jesus said, “Suffer little children to come unto me.” This is a beautiful and favorite motto in a thousand Sunday School rooms, outside whose sacred walls are hosts of children who are withheld from such coming to Him by the vile and squalid life in which they are reared,—whose first lisplings are curses, whose first lessons are of sin.

There is a prevailing apathy in regard to them, a prevailing fear

of consequences in vigorous dealing with them. Often have those who know the dark side of life seen them bruised and maimed by brutal, drunken parents, suffering with cold and hunger, while the wages which should have fed and warmed them are expended in debauchery.

Let us see that the little ones of Jesus are not hindered from winning the blessings so freely bestowed upon this people.

Let not our slothfulness, or our cowardice, or our ignorance, or our indifference, prevent us from working both individually and in unison until every child has all the rights and privileges which we ensure to our own.

CLARA T. LEONARD.

MARCH 2, 1881.

APPENDIX.

TABLE No. 1.

CHILDREN SUPPORTED BY TOWNS AND CITIES.

Number remaining Mar. 31, 1880.

(Latest date of returns.)

		In Almshouses.	Else- where.	Total.
County Barnstable,	.	13	5	18
Berkshire,	.	10	15	25
Bristol,	.	75	.	75
Dukes,
Essex,	.	99	9	108
Franklin,	.	5	12	17
Hampden,	.	26	46	72
Hampshire,	.	4	10	14
Middlesex,	.	125	7	132
Nantucket,	.	3	.	3
Norfolk,	.	24	29	53
Plymouth,	.	20	3	23
Suffolk, { Boston,	.	136	217*	353
{ Chelsea & Winthrop,	.		2	2
Worcester,	.	82	5	87
		622	360	982
Whole number supported by towns,				
March 31, 1879,	.	680	334†	1014
Number supported March 31, 1878,	.	637	317†	954

*In Marcella Street Home. † Including 175 in 1878, and 204 in 1879, at the Marcella Street Home.

TABLE No. 2.

CHILDREN IN CARE OF THE STATE, SEPTEMBER 30, 1880.

	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
At State Primary School, Monson, .	299	123	422
Placed in families from S. P. S., .	184	113	297
State Reform School, Westboro' .	194		194
In families placed from S. R. S., .	257		257
State Industrial School, Lancaster, .		71	71
In families from S. I. S., . .		79	79
 In State Schools, total, . .	 934	 386	 1320
Juvenile offenders in custody of Board of Health, Lunacy and Charity, placed in families,	130	44	174
Placed in homes from Tewksbury Almshouse,	5	5	10
Infants in Mass. Infant Asylum, .			5
“ boarded out from Asylum, .			66
“ “ “ by State author- ities, . .			35
 Total in custody of State, . .	 1069	 435	 1610*
Escaped from homes and places un- known, during the year, . . .	95	22	117

TABLE No. 3.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN STATE CUSTODY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1879.

	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
State Reform School, Westboro', .	222		222
Placed out from S. R. S., . .	337		337
State Industrial School, Lancaster, .		76	76
Placed out from S. I. S., . .		94	94
State Primary School, Monson, .	309	134	443
Placed out from S. P. S., . .	189	114	303
In custody of Board of H., L. & C., .	189	45	234
Placed out from Tewksbury, . . .	3	4	7
Infants in Mass. Infant Asylum, .			13
“ boarded out from “ .			70
 1249	 467	 1799†	

* 106 infants not classified in regard to sex.

† 83

NOTES TO THE TABLES.

TABLE No. 1.—The figures in this table are necessarily a year old, as the census of the children in the care of the cities and towns is only taken once a year, viz., in April; and it is probable that the whole number is now considerably less than it was on the 31st of March, 1880. For the number of children supported at public expense has been less during the past year than for several preceding years.

TABLE No. 2.—The number of infant children shown in this table (106) is the number actually supported by the State six months ago. The present number (March 22, 1881) is somewhat larger, viz.: 126, of whom 70 are in charge of the Massachusetts Infant Asylum, mostly boarded out, and 56 are in families, where they have been placed by the Superintendent of Out-Door Poor since the middle of April, 1880, when the law authorizing this boarding-out system went into effect. These 56 last mentioned are what remain of 117 received by Dr. Wheelwright in the past eleven months; of whom 17 were discharged well, or adopted, and 44 died, leaving 56 now boarded out, as above mentioned. These infants are chiefly those not accepted by the Massachusetts Infant Asylum, for physical or other reasons, and are of inferior vitality to the selected children received by the Asylum. The mortality among the selected children, annually, is perhaps 14 per cent.; among the rejected 36 per cent.; an average for the whole of 25 per cent., or that of ordinary society.

TABLE No. 3.—The total of children in custody shown by this table (1799) is somewhat exaggerated, no such careful inquiry having been made previous to Sept. 30, 1879, as was made by the State Superintendent of Indoor Poor, during the year 1880. At the date mentioned in Table No. 3 (Sept. 30, 1879), no children were boarded out directly by the State authorities, the law authorizing this having been passed in March, 1880. In neither of the tables can the infants be classified in respect to sex, and, therefore, the aggregate of each table differs from the aggregate of the two sexes as shown by the tables. The number at present in the custody of the State (March 22, 1881), is somewhat less than on the first of October, 1880, and does not exceed 1600.

A comparison of table 3 with table 2 shows a decrease in the number of children supported by or in custody of the State, as well as in those supported by towns. Both these classes of children are diminished by the prosperous condition of the country.

It will be seen by table 1, that the law prohibiting the maintenance of children in almshouses is not obeyed, generally. The city of Springfield obeys it fully, and retains no children in the almshouse (except infants with their mothers) except for a short period—until a home can be found. This city had, March 31, 1880, four children temporarily in almshouses; twenty-three in good homes, thirteen of whom were young children, boarded; the rest placed out without payment for board, but under control of overseers.

It will also be seen that the whole number supported by towns on the 31st March, being,—

1878,	.	.	.	954;
1879,	.	.	.	1014;
1880,	.	.	.	982;

Increased during the first year, 60.

Decreased during the second year, 32.

Up to the year 1879, the increase was regular. The passage of the act of prohibition, chap. 103, of 1879, and the conformity to it, in part, of the town authorities, accounts for the decrease. Springfield, which had two years ago an average of thirty-five children in her almshouse, has, at the present date (March, 1881), only about seventeen children in charge, and seldom a new case—most of these are old ones. If Springfield boarded her children in institutions,—either the Catholic Convent at Holyoke, or the excellent Children's Home (Protestant) in Springfield,—the overseers would be besieged with applicants for support of children. If mothers could, as formerly, go with whole families to *reside* at the city almshouse, many idle and shiftless families would be supported there. As it is, the children are all in excellent homes, under careful supervision, gaining inestimably by their situation, and the number of paupers is greatly reduced.

THE
CHARITY LECTURE

DELIVERED AT THE

Hollis-Street Church, Boston,

ON THE

EVENING OF THE FIRST SUNDAY IN DECEMBER,
1880;

WITH A POEM.

BY WILLIAM P. TILDEN,

MINISTER OF NEW SOUTH FREE CHURCH.

PRINTED BY VOTE OF THE MINISTERS AND DEACONS HAVING CHARGE OF
"THE QUARTERLY CHARITY LECTURE."

CAMBRIDGE:
UNIVERSITY PRESS: JOHN WILSON & SON.
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CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER TO REV. W. P. TILDEN.

BOSTON, Dec. 7, 1880.

DEAR SIR,—After the conclusion of the exercises at Hollis Street Church last Sunday evening, it was unanimously voted by the Representatives of the Churches having charge of the “Charity Lecture” that a copy of your excellent Sermon, and of the Poem with which it concluded, be asked of you for publication. They thought that in no better way could they endeavor to recall the public attention to this oldest charitable institution in Boston than by giving a general circulation to your most interesting sketch of this Charity and to your touching Poem. We hope that the same exalted motive which inspired you to write them will prompt you to comply with their request.

Yours sincerely,

G. WASHINGTON WARREN, *Chairman.*
JOHN CAPEN, *Secretary.*

Rev. W. P. TILDEN.

REPLY.

BOSTON, Dec. 11, 1880.

Messrs. G. WASHINGTON WARREN, JOHN CAPEN, *Committee.*

DEAR FRIENDS,—Your kind note, transmitting to me the vote of “The Representatives of the Churches having charge of the Charity Lecture,” in which you are pleased to urge so persuasively my compliance with the vote, gives me all the more pleasure, that there was not the most distant thought of such a request being made when the hasty sketch of our city charities, beginning with the oldest, was written.

But surprised as I was by your request, and inadequate as I know the paper to be, I cheerfully yield it for print, if, on further thought, you may deem it desirable.

The "Christmas Story in Rhyme," with which I closed, was written for another occasion, and printed, a few years ago, in the "Old and New." As it suggests a kind of charity that no *organizations* can fully supply, a charity to which all are called by the Holy Spirit of Human Sympathy, I yield that also to your wishes.

Yours, for all good things, *Old and New*,

W. P. TILDEN.

VOTES.

At a meeting of the Committee having in charge the QUARTERLY CHARITY LECTURE, held after the lecture this evening, it was

Voted, That the thanks of the Committee be presented to the Rev. WILLIAM P. TILDEN, for his interesting lecture, and that a copy be requested of him for the press.

Voted, That the Hon. G. Washington Warren and the Secretary be a Committee to communicate with Mr. Tilden for this purpose.

THE CHARITY LECTURE.

HEBREWS XIII. 16.

"TO DO GOOD AND TO COMMUNICATE FORGET NOT; FOR WITH SUCH SACRIFICES GOD IS WELL PLEASED."

CONVENED, as we are this evening, under the auspices, and to further the objects, of the oldest charitable organization in the city,—the oldest that has been perpetuated from its beginning until now,—it seems a fit occasion for speaking of the Boston charities of to-day. But first let me say a word of the rise and progress, the decline and fall, though not extinction, of this long-lived, highly useful, and *still fruitful* charity, which again makes its annual appeal to your respect and reverence, though with little hope of your contributions.

I have been so much interested and edified in looking over its records that I beg the privilege of noting some things which may prove of as much interest to some of you as they have to me. These records have been kept with remarkable fidelity and legibility, showing the good penmanship of colonial days, and making it easy to trace the stream of beneficence which it chronicles, and which has watered the wastes of poverty, in our city, for one hundred and sixty years.

The head-waters of the stream, like most head-waters, are lost in obscurity, but the first recorded spring bubbled up from a little circle of benevolent-hearted folk who were accustomed to meet quarterly, on Sunday evenings, for charitable purposes, at the house of one Elder Brigham. After the elder's death, they met with his son Henry, and still later at the house of Deacon Jonathan Williams, such ministers as they deemed desirable and could obtain being invited to preach. But there is no record of these meetings up to 1720, when it was decided to request the ministers of the town to take their turns in regular course. With this new arrangement the record begins. Cotton Mather, naturally enough, was the first to preach, and he took for his text the words I have quoted: "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Dr. Mather was at this time about fifty-seven, in the prime of his powers; a colleague of his father, Increase Mather, in the pastorate of the North Church, the father living in advanced age. This first meeting was held March 6, 1720, and a collection was taken of thirty pounds ten shillings, distributed among sixty-one persons.

At first these quarterly gatherings were known simply as "Charity Meetings," but subsequently as "The Quarterly Charity Lecture." Under the latter title the organization has come down to us.

For twenty years after the new departure the meetings were still held in the house of Deacon Williams. But in 1740 they went, to use the words of the record, "to the Chamber of the Town House, where the Representatives meet." Two years later is this quaint record: "March 7, 1742, Mr. Crocker, a young gentleman,

preached for Rev. Thomas Prince. Such a thronged assembly of women, boys, &c., that the gentlemen who usually attend could not get in. Collected £75. Lost by ye thronged assembly at least £30." This is interesting, as showing that in those primitive times they thought more of the amount collected than of the *largeness* of the congregation.

Dec. 9, 1747, there is this memorandum: "This morning the Town House took fire, and consumed with a great part of the papers and records." Driven out of their "Chamber," the next meeting we find was held in Faneuil Hall, where they were continued for thirteen years, when, in December of 1760, *it* also was burned, and they returned to the Representatives' Chamber until Faneuil Hall was repaired. Here they continued to hold their meetings until March 5, 1775, when we find this suggestive record: "Through the insults and violence of British troops, and the difficulties thence arising, the meetings were suspended until Dec. 1, 1776, when they were, through the favor of Divine Providence, again revived."

A few years later, the Lectures became so popular that on June 5, 1785, when Peter Thacher, just settled at Brattle Street, a man of great eloquence and power, preached, we find the record: "This lecture being greatly thronged, it was thought most convenient to remove from Faneuil Hall to the Old South Meeting House." Here they continued to hold the Lectures until the great fire eight years ago rendered it unfit for use.

I find by the record that I am destined to go down to posterity, or up to the top shelves of the Historical Society, as the last preacher of the Quarterly Lecture in the Old South Meeting House while it was yet a church, and before it became itself an object of public charity.

To one whose prospect of posthumous distinction is limited, there is some comfort even in this.

Twenty years ago, in 1860, the old custom of holding the meetings quarterly was changed, and since then the "Quarterly Lecture" has been only once a year, the first Sunday evening in December. It is still known, however, as the "Quarterly Charity Lecture."

It is very interesting, in running the eye over the record of preachers and preaching, to note the rich variety of texts gleaned from all parts of the Bible, suggesting fit topics of discourse during these hundred and sixty years. If one wished to make a collection of choice and pertinent texts for use on charitable occasions, he could hardly find a better aid in his selections. Then, too, it is like walking with departed spirits to read, not in print, but in the veritable handwriting of the scribe of the period, the names of men who were a part of the best life of the town a century and a half ago.

All the Mathers — Increase, Cotton, and Samuel, father, son, and grandson — were on the stage when the record of this charity began ; though the grandfather was over eighty, and the grandson was ordained a few years later. Here we meet with Wadsworth, Foxcroft, and Chauncy, who left his mark upon the time in which he lived, as well as his name on the street on which his church stood, and the school that still keeps his memory green. Colman, also, and Checkley, Peter Thacher, Joseph Sewall, and Thomas Prince of the Old South, famous as a preacher and a man of letters, who bequeathed to the church his valuable library, which was partially destroyed by the British soldiery during the Revolution, a remnant only still remaining in our Public Library. We can hear him preach in his own church one hundred and forty-five years ago from the words of

Paul, “Let us not be weary in well-doing.” This was the Prince whose quaint prayer, when the French fleet was on its way with the intention of laying Boston in ashes, is thus thrown into verse by Longfellow :—

“ O Lord ! we would not advise,
 But if in thy providence
A tempest *should* arise
 To drive the French fleet hence,
And scatter it far and wide,
 Or sink it in the sea,
We would be satisfied ;
 And thine the glory be.”

The fleet never arrived.

Here, too, we meet Mather Byles, the first minister of Hollis Street Church, ordained as its pastor near a century and a half ago, who, during the latter part of his life, in Revolutionary times, was arrested for his sympathy with the Tories, and put under guard, which was changed from time to time, till his final release, leading him to say with his usual wit that he had been “ guarded, regarded, and disregarded.”

Here, too, we meet with Dr. Belknap, of hymnal notoriety,—whose first charity lecture is particularly noticed,—and Eckley, Clark, Wright, Howard, John Eliot, Dr. Cooper, Dr. Kirkland, and so down to the present century. Channing preached his first lecture the year after he was settled in Federal Street, from the beatitude, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Then Buckminster, the eloquent preacher, and Samuel Cooper Thacher, the saintly minister of Church Green, who died in the opening flower of youth, of whom Channing said, “He was one of the most blameless men, of the most devoted ministers, and of the fairest examples of the distinguishing virtues of Christianity.” Here, also,

we meet Greenwood, Ware, and Pierpont, the poet and reformer, Young, Frothingham, the enthusiastic and devoted Gannett, and so on to those who are still among us, honored and beloved.

One of the many interesting things noted in this record is the fact, very simple in itself, that June 7, 1830, just fifty years ago last June, “*Rev. Ralph Waldo Emerson preached.*” The title reads queerly now. But we can almost hear his low, rich voice — long may we hear it! — repeat, rather than read, the text he chose for the occasion, “Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.”

Since we have touched the living, I must name one other record. “Sept. 2, 1838, Rev. Mr. Bartol preached. This being the first time he was ever called to preach this lecture, he knew not the hour and came late.” Our dear brother has not probably the slightest idea of this record attached to his first charity lecture, but I know of no one who can bear it better, since in his later youth no one has shown himself more free from the charge of what has been called “*a belated theologian.*”

It would be interesting to know how much this ancient and honorable charity has raised and expended for the poor in this city during its hundred and sixty years of work. I have taken some pains to get at the figures, by the additions of its five hundred and eighty-one collections, and find that during the first sixty years of its life, up to 1780, the amount of its collections was nineteen thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine pounds, an average of more than three hundred pounds a year. As the most of this was in old tenor, its precise amount in lawful money it would be difficult to state; but reckoned at par value, it amounts to eighty-eight thousand dollars. From 1780 to 1880 it has received and dis-

tributed one hundred and thirty thousand dollars, an average of thirteen hundred dollars a year through the entire century, making in all *two hundred and eighteen thousand dollars*, not including the receipts of this evening!

It must be said, however, that a large part of the annual receipts, of late years, has come from the bequests of a former generation,—the interest of these bequests being added each year to the collection, or, to put it more properly, the collections of each year being added to the interest of the legacies. But while the annual contributions have been small for many years, the legacies of the generous dead have more than supplied the deficiencies of the delinquent living. So that during the last ten years this charity has had more money to distribute annually than in any former decade of its life.

The smallest box-collection recorded occurred on Dec. 6, 1863. It was one dollar and sixty cents. But even then the shades of the departed came forward and made up the amount to one thousand four hundred and forty-one dollars and eighty-nine cents. Nevertheless, the worthy scribe, B. H. Green, not being satisfied that the “celestial” should so far exceed the “terrestrial” contribution, makes this comment: “The lecture was very thinly attended, so that a similar occurrence will probably stop the *procession* of the contribution-boxes.” “One dollar and sixty cents!!” he adds, with two scornful exclamation points. The phrase, “procession of the contribution-boxes,” seems to have been chosen for its *funereal* associations, and was plainly selected to suggest the speedy dissolution of this annual charity. But it lives on still. The collection has never fallen quite so low since, and the very last year of its life it distributed over fourteen hundred dollars.

Now, is such an association, one hundred and sixty years old, with such a history and such associations, which has raised and distributed among the poor of this town and city *two hundred and eighteen thousand dollars*, and is still distributing at the rate of *thirteen hundred dollars a year*, — is such an association to be given up, — left to die of sheer neglect, and its rich legacies pass into other channels? It cannot be. It must not be. It *will not be*, if the churches to whom this charitable work is committed be not utterly false to their trust. Let the new instrumentalities for meeting the wants of the poor and needy be multiplied to meet the increasing demand, but let us hold on to this blessed old charity; not merely to distribute its funds, but to continue its life and perpetuate the grand work for which it was instituted a hundred and sixty years ago.

It is a burning shame that from the eight churches which have received from the fathers this charge to keep, only a baker's dozen are accustomed to appear at the annual meetings, though each and all are ready enough to secure the annual dividend for distribution among their poor. May there not be some method devised for a revival of interest among these churches in this old charity, that its annual meetings may not be a mere form? Only let due thought be given to it, let the association be judged by its fruits, by what it has accomplished, what it is accomplishing each year, and the greater good it may yet do, and our annual meetings can hardly fail, either in numbers or in contributions. They will breathe into the old form a new life, and open to it new avenues of sacred uses.

Of course the new enterprises of charity which have sprung out of this, and out of benevolent hearts, independent of this, and which have been so multiplied of late years that we can hardly keep the run of them, —

of course these, growing out of a want of the times, will take, and ought to take, each its rightful share of public sympathy and aid. Only we need not give up the old because of the new, but use it to work with the new for the furtherance of the one great object at which all charities aim.

The number of regularly organized Boston charities, at the present time, will astonish those who have not kept themselves informed concerning them. I had begun in a small way, for my own satisfaction, a list of these city charities, when I saw noticed "A Directory of the Charitable and Beneficent Organizations of Boston, prepared by the Associated Charities." This was just what I wished. I got the book, and found it replete with the most valuable information. In the preface it is said, "The Associated Charities of Boston publish this book as a part of their work of bringing our charitable agencies into relations of closer co-operation, and especially of aiding our citizens to use all these agencies more readily." The book is a great aid in doing this. It shows what a *multitude* of noble charities Boston contains already, and helps one to see what is further needed. It details the processes by which the new organization would co-operate with all other organizations in the city, in the relief of real want, and in ferreting out fraud and imposture, of which there is still a vast amount. It is a book that should be owned and read by all interested in the problem of city poverty and want, its relief, and, where it is possible, its prevention. It not only astonishes one with the array of charitable agencies already at work, but contains valuable suggestions for working with method and wisdom, and shows how all good citizens may co-operate with these agencies in the furtherance of their objects.

The various charitable and benevolent organizations of Boston are arranged in this volume in twelve classes.

Class First. INDUSTRIAL.—In which such institutions as “The Industrial Aid Society,” “Boston Industrial Temporary Home,” “Young Men’s Christian Association,” and “Young Men’s Christian Union” are reckoned. About eighty associations are named in this class, related more or less closely to industrial charity.

Class Second. GOVERNMENT AID.—Under which is included not the city aid merely, but county and State aid of which the city may avail itself. But the city alone has *twenty-five* different ministries of aid; though several in this class, such as the public schools and Public Library, are educational rather than charitable.

Class Third. RELIEF IRRESPECTIVE OF CLASS.—Such as “The Fragment Society,” “The Howard Benevolent Society,” “North Street Union Mission for the Poor,” and “St. Joseph’s Home for Sick and Destitute Servant Girls.” There are over thirty agencies of relief under this head.

Class Fourth. RELIEF FOR SPECIAL CLASSES.—Such as the “Harris Fund for the Blind,” “Police Charitable Fund,” “Seaman’s Friend Society,” and special associations for the aid of musicians, printers, soldiers, widows, physicians, clergymen, theological students, and one for “Second Advent Converts.” There are between fifty and sixty of these organizations for the relief of special classes of persons.

Class Fifth. AID FOR FOREIGNERS.—Germans, French, English, Scotch, Welsh, Swiss, Belgians, Hollanders, Israelites, Italians, Portuguese, and Scandinavians. There are thirteen associations in the city of this

kind, showing that our foreign population have a care for their brethren in want.

Class Sixth. SICK AND DEFECTIVE. — Under this head are “Ambulance Service,” “Free Nurses, and Rides for the Sick,” “Hospital Newspaper Society,” the city hospitals, homœopathic and allopathic, for all sorts of people,—men, women, and children, seamen and servant girls, deaf, dumb, blind, and feeble-minded. Institutions for all sorts of diseases,—the Consumptives’ Home, the Spinal Home, the Nervine Asylum, the Small-Pox Hospital, and the North and South End Diet Kitchens. I counted SEVENTY different organizations under this head.

Class Seventh. FLOWER AND FRUIT MISSIONS. — There are only two of these sweet ministries to the sick. The “Boston Flower and Fruit Mission,” at Hollis Street Chapel, that has been sending flowers, plants, slips, fruit, and vegetables to the sick and infirm poor, to hospitals, dispensaries, &c., for eleven years; and the “Shawmut Avenue Universalist Flower Mission,” formed a year later, whose object is to carry flowers and fruits to all the deserving poor and sick of the South End who are brought to its notice.

These are inexpensive charities that carry a world of comfort and cheer into darkened homes. They might easily be multiplied to the mutual benefit of givers and receivers.

Class Eighth. HOMES. — Under this head are all the city homes for the poor, and also the homes for the unfortunate, established by individual beneficence. You will be surprised to find *seventy-five* organizations under this head, though many of these have been named before under other headings, and are brought in here again; not, we may presume, to make our charitable institu-

tions seem more numerous than they really are, but owing to the difficulty of a proper classification.

Class Ninth. REFORM.—“House of Industry,” “Society for Aiding Discharged Convicts,” “Reformatory Prison for Women,” “Asylum for Discharged Female Prisoners,” “Institution for the Rescue of Fallen Women” (there are none as yet for the rescue of fallen men, though every fallen woman implies a fallen man, of equal guilt, to say the least), “Homes for Boys” who have been sentenced for petty offences, or who are paupers, where they may be educated and taught to work. “Temperance Societies,” open and secret, and homes for intemperate men, and women too,—separate organizations. There are thirty-four agencies named under this head.

Class Tenth. HUMANE.—Societies for the “Protection of Children,” for the “Protection of Animals,” for the “Recovery of Lost or Stolen Children,” for “Saving Life,” and for “Public Health,” embracing all sanitary regulations and efforts.

Class Eleventh. MUTUAL BENEFITS.—In this class are named “Mutual Benefit Societies,” “Equity Unions,” “Co-operative Stores,” “Homestead Saving Funds, and Loans,” Savings Banks, Masonic, Odd Fellows, and Temperance Orders. Also special societies in which Post-Office employés, East Boston Ferry men, pilots, shipwrights and caulkers, railway employés, carpenters, firemen, agree to stand by each other, and lend a hand in the hour of need.

Class Twelfth. EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS.—In this class are arranged all our beneficent institutions, schools of all sorts,—day and evening,—libraries, reading rooms, institutes, colleges, universities, churches, chapels, missionary, tract, Bible societies, and the like. I count two

hundred and eighty-five of these beneficent instrumentalities.

So much for the book. The citizens of Boston should be grateful to the Associated Charities for putting these facts into a condensed and cheap form, accessible to all. If the book be not a model in classification, often making the same institution do service in so many classes as to leave one in doubt where to place it, we must remember the difficulty of reducing all these various agencies to perfect order and keeping each in its place, since one institution—a church, *e. g.*—ought to be at once an educational, a religious, a reformatory, and a charitable society.

But the book has one serious omission. I have looked in vain for any notice of “The Quarterly Charity Lecture,” though it is the oldest charity in the city,—a charity which, as we have said, has already distributed among the poor two hundred and eighteen thousand dollars, with a larger amount during the last ten years than in any previous decade of its life. I think we should authorize our scribe to send a note to the committee of revision before the issue of the next edition, telling them that we “still live,” and are distributing for charitable purposes about thirteen hundred dollars annually.

With this really wonderful array of charitable and beneficent organizations in our city, for the instruction of the ignorant, the relief and prevention of poverty, the comfort and care of the sick poor,—curable and incurable,—men, women, and children, of all races and nations; with its homes for unfortunates of every class, its appliances for reform, its industrial and helpful agencies, its loan funds, and multiform aids to industry and virtue, it would seem as if there need be no suffering among

the worthy poor that might not find relief, if the sufferer could only be known to those whose duty and privilege it is to impart the needful aid. I doubt if there be another city on the face of the earth where more is done for the relief of want, and where aids to industry and virtue are more abundant, or used with more earnest desire to have them tell for human weal.

But there is much yet to be done, and it will be done just as soon as the real need is felt. None know better than ministers at large that *intemperance* is still the fruitful source of *most* of the poverty and suffering there is in our city. And if one of the agencies for this reform, successful in other cities,—cheap, clean, well-furnished, well-kept coffee-houses,—could be opened in all parts of the city where men most congregate, and drinking saloons are most abundant, I believe it would be an efficient help, working with all other agencies, for the suppression of this persistent vice, continually sapping the very foundations of personal character, domestic peace, and all that is essential to real manhood.

The “Holly Tree Inn” movement, started by Mrs. J. T. Fields a few years ago, was a success, as far as it went. It is difficult, indeed, to find just the right persons to take the charge of these cheap coffee-rooms. It is difficult, under the best management, to make them self-sustaining in all localities where they are needed. But could there be sufficient interest awakened to demand that they be thoroughly tried, at whatever cost at the beginning, we are quite sure they would become most efficient temperance agencies.

But make our charitable and beneficent organizations ever so numerous and ever so perfect, they never can supersede the necessity of our own personal ministry to the needy around us. There are duties and responsibilities

we can never delegate to others ; and the sweetest and most blessed charities are those where hand and heart go together, and the soul of the needy one is fed with real sympathy, while the body is supplied with needful food. So we must not turn over to the missionaries the precious old text Cotton Mather used in his opening charity lecture a hundred and sixty years ago, but take it right home to ourselves as if spoken to each one of us, as it really is : “ To do good and to communicate forget not ; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

And now, as an illustration of the way in which all who will may become ministers to human want, without the aid of any organization save that in which a sympathetic heart beats, let me read as I promised

A CHRISTMAS STORY IN RHYME.

BY A MINISTER AT LARGE.

The fire was out, the room was cold,
The things about were poor and old,
The floor was bare, though neat and clean ;
The hand of care was plainly seen,
Making the best of the meagre store
Left unsold from days of yore.

Over the mantel a picture hung,
The central figure was fair and young, —
A mother, holding upon her knee.
A darling babe, just turned to see
A manly face, blue-eyed and mild,
Looking down in love on mother and child.

That babe is now a girl of seven,
She is fast asleep in the old arm-chair ;
The father for years has been in heaven ;
And the mother’s brown and glossy hair
Is streaked with the gray of early sorrow.

She is out in the chill, cold, piercing wind,
 Hoping some bit of work to find,
 To earn the bread for the coming morrow.
 The frost on the panes is gathering fast,
 The windows clatter beneath the blast,
 The twilight darkens the chilly room,
 But still the mother does not come.

The child in the chair still quietly sleeps,
 While over her face a sweet smile creeps,
 As the Christmas bell, from a neighboring steeple,
 Rings out its call to the waiting people,
 To come and keep the Christmas Eve,
 And gifts from the Christmas tree receive.

Each note of that sweet-toned Christmas bell
 Comes to the ear of little Nell
 Like an angel's voice, and it seems to sing :
 " Coming, coming on golden wing,
 A gift from the Christmas tree to bring."

Just then she woke ; for her mother's tread,
 Heavy and slow, she heard on the stair.
 With bounding feet and cheek aglow
 She sprang from her dreamy sleeping-chair
 And opened the door ; where, covered with snow,
 Pale and chilled, with despairing look,
 As if of earth and heaven forsook,
 The mother stood, and could only say,
 " Dear Nell, after trying so hard all day
 I have neither work nor bread."

" But, mother, dear mother," cried little Nell,
 " Somebody's coming, I know full well,
 For just as the Christmas bell was ringing,
 I heard an angel sweetly singing,
 ' Coming, coming on golden wing,
 A gift from the Christmas tree to bring.'

“ And, mother, the angel’s face so fair
 Looked just like papa’s hanging there.
 Do you think that he the angel can be,
 Coming to bring from the Christmas tree
 Something for you and something for me ? ”

“ Poor child, your father is dead and gone,
 And we are left in the world alone.
 Nobody cares for the perishing poor,
 Though the wolf of hunger be at the door.
 The bell that calls to the Christmas tree
 Rings not for you, rings not for me.
 We have not a crumb in the house to eat ;
 I have fed all day on hope *and sleet*,
 But now my last faint hope has fled !
 I wish that you and I were dead.”

“ But an angel, mother, the truth must tell,
 And would he have said to little Nell,
 And told it, too, with the Christmas bell,
 That he was coming to you and me,
 With a real gift from the Christmas tree,
 If he did n’t mean to come right here
 To bring us something, mother dear ? ”

No answer to this the mother gave,
 For hunger and cold and weariness
 Had struck to her heart a chill of the grave.
 Her soul was in frozen dreariness ;
 She threw her waterproof into a chair ;
 She shook the snow from her matted hair.
 Under the stove, in an old tin bowl,
 Was the last of her little stock of coal.
 She gathered it up, and with little bits
 Of paper, and few remaining chips,
 She kindled a fire. But the terrible chill
 Which had struck to her heart remained there still.

'T was a chill of soul, which naught could remove
 But that warmth that comes from human love.
 "Get warm, my child, and we 'll go to bed,"
 In hopeless tones the mother said.
 "But somebody 's coming, mother dear,
Somebody 's coming. Hark ! don't you hear ? "

A light step on the stair was heard ;
 A holy joy the child's heart stirred.
 A tap at the door. "I told you so,"
 Cried Nell, as a woman entered the room ;
 "I told you an angel was coming soon."

"Not an angel, my darling little child,"
 Replied the stranger, in accents mild.
 "Angels, you know, have wings, but I
 Have to go on my feet, for I cannot fly,
 Though 'twould be very nice, I must confess,
 If one could fly on a night like this."

Then to the mother the angel said,
 "Let me tell you how my feet were led
 To you and your child
 On a night so wild.

A little while since, an hour or more,
 While hurrying home, I passed your door.
 I saw you enter ; I know not why
 I turned to look. Your face so pale
 Of such deep anguish told the tale,
 As if to hope you had said 'good-by.'
 Still on I passed, but when the bell
 Rang out its merry peals of Christ to tell,
 A voice kept saying to my inward ear,
 'Bear to the needy sufferers help and cheer ;
 Herald the advent of the Christ child holy,
 By ministering to the poor and lowly.'
 So I have come a little gift to bring ;
 Please take it as a Christmas offering."

On the table white and neat,
 For little Nell, lay bread and meat.
 For the mother's thirsting soul
 Words that bade the hot tears roll
 Down the white and sunken cheek,—
 Such angel words as women speak,
 When a message from above
 Sends them on a work of love.

Then, as arose the angel guest,
 Into the mother's palm she pressed
 A gift, and with a look that told
 Of something richer far than gold
 She said, "Good-night; be of good cheer;
 Trust in the Lord and never fear,
 Remembering, *it is the night*
 Reveals the stars, in glory bright."

A holy light in Nell's face shone.
 Soon as the messenger was gone
 She sprang upon her mother's knee,
 And clasped her neck in ecstasy.
 "Mother, we are not left alone,"
 She said, in sweet and tender tone.
 "Oh, don't you think 't was father dear,
 Or may be 't was the Christ so good,
 Who told the lady to seek us here
 And bring us help and food?"

"God knows, my child, I cannot tell.
 When on the stair that footstep fell,
 I thought of father coming home,
 As he was wont, when work was done.
 And when *she* looked on you and smiled,
 I thought of Mary and her Child.
 Then when she turned and spoke to me,
 It seemed like Jesus on the sea,
 Hushing the stormy waves of ill
 And sweetly saying, 'Peace, be still.'

O Nell, how could I ever have said
‘I wish that you and I were dead’?
But in that dark and blank despair,
I had no heart for hope or prayer.
Not till the *human angel* came
Did faith and hope revive again.
Surely the Comforter draws nigh
Through tender, human sympathy ;
And never again shall thought of mine
Distrust the Providence Divine.”

O ye, who would bright angels be,
Wait not for death to give you wings.
God’s poor still wait imploringly
For rescue from their sufferings.
And all who lend a helping hand
Belong to God’s great angel band.

Whose hearts respond at Mercy’s call,
Are ministering spirits all.

*To the Members of the Eight Churches Associated in the Foundation
of "The Quarterly Charity Lecture."*

The sad neglect to which this venerable and excellent charity has in these later times been consigned through the indifference of the churches, or it may be by the pressure of other charitable claims of more recent origin, calls imperatively for one more vigorous, conscientious effort to restore it to the respect and dignity which formerly attached to it.

It goes back for its origin to the year 1720. It was at first held regularly in private dwellings on Sunday evenings; later at times in Faneuil Hall, the Town House, and finally in the Old South Church, where it continued until that ceased to be a house of worship. It received the name of the "Boston Quarterly Charity Lecture," and was given on the first Sunday evenings of March, June, September, and December, by the ministers in turn of the First, Second, Old South, Arlington Street, Hollis Street, Brattle Street, West, New North, and New South Churches. This arrangement continued, with great lack of interest and a lamentable falling off in attendance, until Jan. 19, 1860, when, after much deliberation, and with the best legal advice, it was voted to have but a single lecture each year, and that on the first Sunday in December. And so it remains at the present time, the lecture being given annually in Hollis Street Church on the first Sunday in December. There are two funds for the benefit of the poor of Boston, the annual income of which must be distributed at this lecture, and can be availed of legally in no other way. These are the "Preston Fund" and the "Old South Fund," the two yielding from fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred dollars.

The will of Sarah Preston, after disposing of certain legacies, continues, "And lastly, as to the rest and residue of my estate of whatsoever nature or kind, I give and bequeath the same to the deacons of the New South Church in Boston, and their successors, for and in trust, and it is my will that the income and produce of the same shall be added by them to the collection which may be made at the Quarterly Lecture in Boston, and appropriated for ever to the relief of the poor, and distributed in the same manner and at the same time as the

said collections may be distributed." The terms of the "Old South" bequest are similar.

Here we have the necessity for an annual Charity Lecture, at which a collection must be taken up for the benefit of the poor of Boston; otherwise they can realize no advantage from these munificent bequests.

Is it not then worth making the effort to redeem this lecture (now held but once a year) from the insignificance into which it has fallen?

The minister of one or another of the churches above named is expected to provide for this lecture. Shall he be still doomed to the thankless task of preaching to empty pews? Will not a highly favored people—a people who have the reputation of being profusely liberal—rather take pride in sustaining by their presence and by their gifts this oldest of Boston's charities, which, during its existence of one hundred and sixty years, has been the means of distributing over two hundred thousand dollars towards the relief of the worthy poor of our city?

G. WASHINGTON WARREN,
JOHN CAPEN, } Committee.

BOSTON, Jan. 25, 1881.

NAMES OF THE CHURCHES,

*With their Ministers and Deacons, associated for the maintenance
of the "Quarterly Charity Lecture."*

The First Church in Boston.

REV. RUFUS ELLIS, D.D.	Minister.
GEORGE O. HARRIS	
JOHN COLLAMORE	
G. WASHINGTON WARREN	Deacons.

Second Church.

REV. EDWARD A. HORTON	Minister.
NATHAN CLARK	
FRANCIS H. BROWN	
FRANCIS BROWN	Deacons.

Old South Church.

REV. JONATHAN M. MANNING, D.D.	Minister.
AVERY PLUMER	
FREDERIC D. ALLEN	
MOSES MERRILL	Deacons.

Church in Arlington Street.

FORMERLY THE FEDERAL STREET CHURCH.

REV. JOHN F. W. WARE	Minister.
JOHN H. ROGERS	Deacon.

Hollis Street Church.

REV. H. BERNARD CARPENTER	Minister.
LYMAN E. SIBLEY	
JOHN CAPEN	Deacons.

West Church.

REV. CYRUS A. BARTOL, D.D.	<i>Minister.</i>
AMOS BAKER	
ALEXANDER WADSWORTH }	<i>Deacons.</i>
THOMAS GAFFIELD	

Brattle Square Church.

NOW ON CLARENDON STREET.

— — — — —	<i>Minister.</i>
PETER T. HOMER	<i>Deacon.</i>

New South Free Church.

REV. WILLIAM P. TILDEN	<i>Minister.</i>
CLEMENT WILLIS }	
WILLIAM MAXWELL }	<i>Deacons.</i>

